

## Note on Secondary Homonymy

BY

EMILY H. VOKES

Department of Geology, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

THE NOMENCLATURE PROBLEM of secondary homonymy is one that is a trial to all workers, one that causes innumerable shifting back and forth of names and one that clearly is not always understood. This is made apparent in a recent paper by CERNOHORSKY (1971: 188), who states that he does not consider *Murex aculeatus* Lamarck, 1822, a secondary homonym of *Aranea aculeata* Perry, 1811, nor of *Muricites aculeatus* Schlotheim, 1820.

According to the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, Article 57: "The Law of Homonymy applies to species-group names originally published in (primary homonyms), or later brought together in (secondary homonyms) the same genus or collective group, except as noted in Article 59c." The latter states that: "A name rejected after 1960 as a secondary homonym is to be restored as the valid name whenever a zoologist believes that the two species-group taxa in question are not congeneric, unless it is invalid for other reasons."

Secondary homonyms are created by bringing together two species formerly not in the same nominal genus. Such is the case presented by the genus *Aranea* Perry, 1810. Perry chose to employ the name "*Murex*" for species of the Fascioliariidae, and to create a new name, *Aranea*, for those spinous species today included in *Murex* s. s. This was a perfectly legal restriction of the multigeneric *Murex* of Linnaeus, which did include the Fascioliariidae as well as the Muricidae. However, as a result, the species named in the genus *Aranea* Perry are all valid, incontestable members of *Murex*, as recognized today. Even though they were named in a nominally different genus, they have been "secondarily brought together" in *Murex*, and I do not think there is any zoologist who will say that most are not congeneric with the type species of *Murex*. There are a few species that might be transferred to a genus *Bolinus*, in which case *Aranea conspicua* (= *Murex cornutus*, subgenus *Bolinus*) would no longer preoccupy *Murex conspicuus* Braun, 1863. But *Aranea aculeata* and *Aranea pallida* are both congeneric with *Murex*, and as such preoccupy *Murex aculeatus* Lamarck, 1822, and *Murex pallidus* Broderip, 1833, regardless of the fact that the junior species are a *Chicoreus* and a *Trophon*, respectively.

Once a species is named in a genus, the subsequent generic placement is irrelevant. *Murex aculeatus* Lamarck can never escape its *Murex* birthright, a "*Murex*" it will always be. The only exception to this is in the case of

two species named in different biologic genera, which have homonymous names (Code, Art. 57-c). An example would be two species with the same name described in *Centronotus* Schneider, 1801 (a fish), and *Centronotus* Swainson, 1833 (a *Hexaplex*).

According to the Code (Art. 52) "homonymy is the identity in spelling of available names," and "the difference of a single letter is sufficient to prevent homonymy" (Art. 56-a and 57-d). However, there are several exceptions to this noted in the Code. At the species-group level there are 12 exceptions cited (Art. 58) whereby differences in spelling do not prevent homonymy, nor do differences in termination due to gender have any effect (Art. 57-b-i). At the generic level there is a single exception, as noted in Art. 56-b, and this applies solely to names originally proposed for fossils. Article 20 states: "If an existing genus-group name has been modified by substituting *-ites*, *-ytes*, or *-ithes* for the original termination, the modified name if applied only to fossils is not available, except for the purposes of the Law of Homonymy" (i. e., it would preoccupy a subsequently proposed genus of the same name). Names including *Muricites* Schlotheim, along with others of its kind, such as *Pectinites* and *Tellinites*, were used to denote fossil representatives of the Recent genera *Murex*, *Pecten*, and *Tellina*, respectively. Thus, *Muricites* and *Murex*, *Pectinites* and *Pecten*, *Tellinites* and *Tellina*, are considered to be **identical** names, and the species named in either member of the pair are affected by the Law of Homonymy (Art. 57). Whether they are primary homonyms, by act of legislation, or secondary homonyms by default, is a somewhat nebulous matter; perhaps it would be best to consider the *-ites* termination an unjustified emendation of the generic name, which does not affect species-group homonymy (Art. 57-b). In any case, the rules of homonymy apply and *Muricites aculeatus* Schlotheim, 1820, preoccupies *Murex aculeatus* Lamarck, 1822; *Muricites cognatus* Schlotheim, 1820, preoccupies *Murex cognatus* Bellardi, 1872; and *Muricites funiculatus* Schlotheim, 1820, preoccupies *Murex funiculatus* Reeve, 1845.

### Literature Cited

- CERNOHORSKY, WALTER OLIVER  
1971. Contribution to the taxonomy of the Muricidae (Gastropoda: Prosobranchia). *The Veliger* 14 (2): 187-191; 1 pl. (1 Oct. '71)